

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

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(202) 461-7600
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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced plans to join forces with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and the National 210 Owners Association, a national private pilots group, to provide special air transport services for VA patients. The agreement was finalized today with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among the three organizations at DAV headquarters in Washington, D.C.

"Today's signing is another step toward meeting an important VA goal -- making our health-care facilities more accessible to all of our veterans who are eligible to use them," VA Deputy Secretary Hershel Gober said. "Thanks to DAV and the National 210 Owners Association, veterans will now be transported quickly, comfortably and easily."

Under the terms of the agreement, the National 210 Owners Association, through its American Veterans' Medical Airlift Service (AVMAS) division, will recruit qualified and certified pilots, provide the aircraft and pilot, and secure the transport services as needed. DAV, through its transportation network, will provide ground transportation from patients' homes to the airport and back, and from the airport to the VA medical center.

The chief of staff of the treating VA medical center is responsible for requesting the air transport service, arrangements for which will be coordinated by VA.

According to the agreement, only flights which can be completed during daylight hours and in good weather will be undertaken.

The agreement was signed by Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D., VA's Deputy Under Secretary for Health; Jan Du Plain, Director of the AVMAS Washington Office; and David W. Gorman, DAV Executive Director.

VA's health-care system has 172 hospitals nationwide in addition to hundreds of satellite outpatient clinics.